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The superintendent of schools in Chicago discusses concurrent efforts to desegregate and decentralize the city's public school systems. He stresses the financial limitations which cripple efforts to ameliorate the urban school crisis. He feels that effective decentralization does not necessitate multiple local boards of education, for the central board can set policy for the entire city and act as "watchdog" over those services which can be more efficiently administered centrally. However, decentralization is needed to make large school systems more responsive to their clientele. (NH)

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James F. Redmond, General Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, discusses in a case analysis concurrent efforts to desegregate and to decentralize one of the nation's largest and most difficult city school systems. Dr. Redmond stresses the financial limitations which so cripple efforts to ameliorate the urban school crisis. He does not believe that effective decentralization necessitates multiple boards of education. In his judgment, the central Board of Education "can set policy for the city as a whole" and can be the "watchdog" of those centralized services which lend themselves to efficiency without interfering with the education of a child. Decentralization, however, maintains the Chicago Superintendent, is needed to make large school systems more sensitive to their clientele. School officials in Chicago and elsewhere "must listen more, observe more, comprehend more and understand more."

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EFFORTS TO DESEGREGATE AND DECENTRALIZE THE ADMINISTRATION OF A LARGE CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM

James F. Redmond, General Superintendent,
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When I heard of the initial controversy over civil rights between the Chicago Board of Education and the federal government, I was far away in Syosset with problems of my own. Then, in October 1966, I assumed the Superintendency of Chicago schools.

I was faced--immediately--with problems of immediate concern--and a two-month deadline for solving them. Coping with the civil rights issue was forced into the background. First, the budget for 1967 had to be made; second, a legislative program for the forthcoming session had to be submitted to the Illinois School Problems Commission; and third--the most frightening of all--was the need for immediate retrenchment to cover an existing five million dollar deficit in the 1966 budget.

We crawled--or is it creaked or is it stumbled?--through these two months and dragged a three million dollar

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deficit over into the adopted budget in January of 1967. As if waiting for me to take a deep breath, the Office of Health, Education and Welfare sent a nice, polite but firm letter to me early in the month; reminding me that the civil rights controversy was far from over. I was asked to immediately reply to their queries about desegregation.

The walls of urban problems had crowded in about now and I decided this was one wall I was not going to break through alone. I wrote to Harold Howe and asked for an appointment to bring some members of my staff and discuss a grant to study the areas of desegregation.

By April, the grant was made and some very able consultants were on hand to work with us. The sum was modest for a varied study that required the talents of a number of specialists. Fortunately for us, the consultants were much more interested in the problems to be studied than in the fees that they might earn. I am quite sure that we could not have purchased their services if it were not for the intriguing possibility that some light might be brought to bear on social problems plaguing every urban school system in America.

It was agreed upon in Washington that--in addition to the four areas of interest to the civil rights people--two more should be studied: one was Research and the other Public Understanding. The original items were--Faculty Assignment Patterns, Boundary and Student Assignment Policies, Vocational Education and Apprentice Training.

In August, we took the report to the Board of Education. It was accepted in principle, with the understanding that the implementation of any recommendations would be brought back to the Board of Education in separate reports.

The press, radio and television reaction was favorable--in some cases laudatory. The public reaction was mixed. Civil right advocates were in some cases unhappy that the report had not made more drastic recommendations. Adherents of the neighborhood school policy were sure the report was sounding the death knell on the local school. More was read into the report than was written in it.

Some of the basic recommendations were as follows:

FACULTY ASSIGNMENT PATTERNS

Intensive efforts should be made to recruit, prepare and keep teachers in inner city schools.

Teachers in inner city schools should be provided with guarded parking lots and/or transportation to and from school.

Instructional groups consisting of the following members were recommended as a staffing pattern for each 150 students:

1 Master teacher
3 Regular teachers
1 Beginning teacher
2 Practice teachers
3 Aides

Principals who are likely to be successful in inner city schools should be identified and selected for assignment

there.

Teacher aides should be available immediately with or without new organizational patterns.

BOUNDARIES AND STUDENT ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

Integration is desirable for white and Negro children alike.

Every effort should be made to retain the white population and promote stabilization in integrated school situations.

Efforts should be made to provide cooperative programs with the private and parochial schools in the city as well as the suburban schools in the metropolitan area.

Short-term Plans

In fringe area schools (now integrated), the minority percentage should be limited to a workable racial balance. In order to maintain the balance, pupils will be transported to a receiving school in an all-white attendance area not adjacent to the sending school attendance area.

Voluntary transfers will be available from the inner city to less crowded schools in other parts of the city.

Boundary changes should be made to reduce racial segregation and to assist in neighborhood stabilization.

School pairing plans (clustering) should be used in key transition areas to achieve integration and stabilization.

Magnet schools, both specialized and general purpose, should be established, with very broad racially mixed

attendance areas.

Long-range Plans

Education parks should be established, combining many kinds of educational programs in one location. Several education parks should be located in a wide variety of places near the outer rim of the city.

School and city governments should work more closely together to effect integration in housing, in schools, and in community development.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Apprentice Program

The Washburne Trade School is operated by the Chicago Board of Education. Selection of apprentices is made by the various sponsoring agencies--employers and unions.

Apprenticeship is a work-study process; the apprentice spends 10 to 20 percent of his time in school and the remainder on the job. The sponsor (employer, union, or other) must accept the enrollee. With few exceptions, apprentices are paid full wages.

It is felt that the school should be continued, but that every effort should be made to improve racial balances.

Negro participation can be increased by increasing the number admitted and decreasing the number dropping out of the program.

Open Enrollment in Vocational Schools

Open enrollment should be widely publicized and

emphasized.

Active and aggressive recruitment should be city-wide. Recruitment should be most active in Grades 10 and 11. Transfer and shared time plans with regular high schools should be expanded and publicized.

Vocational offerings, buildings, and equipment should be attractive and up to date.

Greater variety in programs should be available within the capability of students and the current job opportunities. More summer programs should be offered.

Location of programs should be considered as a means of promoting racial integration. Job placement services should be aided by follow-up of graduates.

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

By its nature, a public school system depends for maximum results on understanding and support from the public. Expansion in public relations is essential, especially at this time when potential for improved education involves program and policy changes which cannot succeed without public acceptance.

A system of fast, flexible, internal communication is needed to keep all school personnel fully informed.

A widespread program of public communication should be initiated to generate interest in--and support for--Chicago's schools, keeping the public fully informed.

It is now a year since the report was presented to the Board of Education. The hoped-for funds from state and

federal sources have not materialized.

However, this has not kept us from moving ahead where it was possible to do so. We instituted a transportation program to help stabilize an integrated community, and to use some available empty seats in an all white neighborhood. We followed the suggestions in the recommendations and moved past fringe school attendance areas to schools beyond. Distances were not great and all schools--sending and receiving--were under the supervision of one district superintendent.

There were five hundred elementary students involved in the transportation program. The reaction in the white school attendance areas was extremely hostile. The very modest program solidified all the forces throughout the city that were neighborhood-school-minded. So loud and so vocal and so numerous were the voices of opposition to transportation that certain segments of the press and the political society grew alarmed and called for capitulation.

As I mentioned previously, there has not been a time since I arrived in Chicago that we have not been fighting a losing battle to meet our meager budget requirements. During this period, we were before the citizens with a request for a fifteen-cent tax increase which would give us approximately fifteen million dollars.

Out of the white areas of the city came a well-financed, well-organized campaign of opposition. There was nothing subtle about the campaign. It was against

transportation. Fear was spread across the city that I was about to have white and Negro children on a continuous bus trip across the city.

Mayor Richard Daley and the Democratic Party, the business community, labor, and all media with the exception of community newspapers in white sections of the city, endorsed and campaigned for the tax rate increase. The Republican Party refused to take a position, but the Republican candidate for governor did issue a statement in support of the increase. Many politicians of both parties joined their constituents in opposition.

In the past, we have carried bond and tax rate increases by a three-to-one majority, this time we carried by eighteen thousand votes. It was a light primary vote in Chicago, but the vote was not light in the white communities.

We closed the school year with our five hundred enrolled in the vacant seats of the white schools. Now, we are evaluating the results of the total program as envisaged in the recommendation. I do not have the complete analysis of staff evaluation as of now.

We are moving ahead on a magnet school, and we have plans under way for what we are calling a Cultural Educational Complex on a site adjacent to the University of Illinois. Each step in the implementation of recommendations has been made in a cooperative venture involving a university, the community and private and parochial schools.

When we have completed our buildings, we intend to involve the business community and the civic and social agencies in the total program of education.

Neighborhood school adherents are just as bitterly opposed to these developments as they are to transportation. It is not a case of our failure to communicate with them, nor of their not understanding what we are about. They are well informed, attend every board meeting, and wait in line for every report issued--or every speech made--anywhere in the city.

The reaction of the white community was a factor in the consideration of the consultants. What they did not anticipate was the rise of Black Nationalism.

There are many among the Negroes who are no longer concerned with integration. They want black schools, black teachers and principals. They want strong courses in Afro-American culture and history.

They want to find meaning and identity in Black Power. They see no virtue in integration that carries with it rejection.

They neither applaud nor condemn what we have done. They want good schools, better equipment, more services; and they want them now.

That we have, through this period, been developing in-service training for teachers and staff, holding certification examinations for many of our substitutes, experimenting with programs designed for specific school

communities, searching out and promoting Negro administrators, making a concerted effort to fit principals to the schools in the communities--all seem to be of minor importance to some whites and some Negroes.

Yet all of these are part of the recommendations; and equally important in the minds of the consultants is the transportation of children.

It is difficult to assess how fast we are moving and with what success. The tumult at times seems louder than the cheers.

There has not been a moment since I arrived that could be called the time for taking inventory. Events and demands pile one upon another in a never-ending procession of problems and decision-makings.

Historically, the General Superintendent of Schools is the end of the line. He says "Yes" or "No" as the problems flow past in an assembly-line repetitiveness.

This thought brings me to a transition: the case study of Decentralization of the Administration of the Chicago Public Schools.

When I arrived in Chicago, Booz, Allen and Hamilton had been engaged by the Chicago Board of Education to make recommendations on organization and decentralization. The staff of Booz, Allen and Hamilton was already at work, interviewing administrators in the Chicago Public Schools.

Like civil rights activities, this study had its share of controversy before the Board of Education took

definite action on it. By the time of my arrival, there were many who were anxious to have me establish my own reorganization before the study was completed.

The top administrative staff had been caught in that most untenable of positions--between the cross fire of controversy. It had incurred the enmity of many in the community, on the Board and in the press.

However, I found top staff willing, cooperative and helpful. I did not ask nor did I want to know what went on before I came. It was my Cabinet, and I wanted to work with them as I found them.

This did not please very many. The staff wondered what I thought. They were anxious to please if I would only tell them what I wanted done. While no one said anything to me directly, I was always aware of the question: When are you going to move and get new key people around you?

Impatience with me had reached a high point on this issue when the Booz, Allen and Hamilton Report was presented to the Board of Education.

The study recommended that the day-to-day operation and decision-making rest in the hands of a Deputy Superintendent. His office would be adequately staffed, with services now supervised by members of my Cabinet. Under the Deputy, there would be three Associate Superintendents, each in charge of an area of our city larger than many of the big cities of America. These offices, too, would be

adequately staffed with personnel.

Reporting to the three area Associates are twenty-seven District Superintendents. Flexibility was permitted so that these District Superintendents could be used as community leaders or as assistants functioning in a special capacity.

The General Superintendent's office was to be staffed with specialists in the areas of Educational Program Planning, Facilities Planning, Financial Planning, Operations Analysis, Community Relations, and Human Relations.

The role of the General Superintendent was to be planner, counselor and supervisor. He was to have time to meet and participate in community affairs and to share with civic and government leaders as a school official in the long range plans of a modern city.

He was to be freed of the enormous amount of paper work so that he would have time to think and plan rather than constantly react to the proliferation of unmet circumstances that piled in upon him from all sections of the city, as is now the case.

Again, the Board of Education accepted the report in principle with the understanding that implementation of each recommendation would come back as a separate Board report.

I have already appointed two Administrative Assistants and the three area Associates. I have not yet named a Deputy.

This fall, we will start moving staff from the Central Office to the field offices of the area Associates. Until now, we have continued top staff assignments as they were in the past. We have appointed the assistants on the General Superintendent's staff. The Associate and assistants who are now filling the same or other roles will relinquish operational responsibilities.

In this beginning phase of decentralization, I do not expect the transition to be either easy or efficient. I do expect it to begin to release the personal initiative and imagination which have tended to wither and die under the efficiency of centralization.

I have no illusions that imagination and creativity will bloom immediately, either. You cannot tighten decision-making into the hands of a few and let this become a pattern for the past forty years without destroying initiative at the lower levels of administration.

Whatever we are doing, whether it be in decentralization or desegregation, we are doing the tasks with a limited amount of money. In our budget estimates last December, we said that it would take $174,000,000 to up-grade the quality of education and to adequately staff the enterprise.

As I mentioned in talking about the fifteen-cent tax increase, we still need sixteen million dollars to keep solvent between now and December 31, the close of our fiscal year. We are asking the Legislature in a postponed session going on this month to increase our State Aid.

One of the real frustrations in the urban school system is this financial inability to meet needs. There are ideas and there are programs which we know are needed and would solve many of the problems of education, but we cannot attempt them because--as Paul Mort once said--"We are still trying to hold education together with clips and rubber bands and sticking tape."

Yet, without money, decentralization is proving to me that the big city cannot be administered in any other way. It is heartening to come into cabinet meetings and hear the Associates talking about what we are doing with our district superintendents, principals, and teachers to meet specific school and community needs.

Less and less are we discussing city-wide educational diets; more and more are we getting to the heart of what must be done in the inner city, which is different from the school that resembles a suburban community school; and what must be done in the school that covers an industrial area; and in the school that serves fringe areas. Our administrators are accepting leadership responsibilities--and this is promising.

At no time have we talked about multiple boards of education. I do not believe that these are necessary to an effective program of decentralization. The Board of Education can set policy for the city as a whole. It can be the watchdog of those centralized services which lend themselves to efficiency without interfering with the

education of a child.

Before I arrived, there had been a city-wide program for advisory groups to work with district superintendents. The plan had been worked out in the Central Office. All were to have the exact number on the Advisory Board; all should have representation in the same way; all should meet at the same time. It never really got under way. The district superintendents could not humanize their community relationships with an organizational chart that had no comprehension of their individual needs.

I do believe in community involvement and I do believe there are ways of achieving it. We are encouraging Councils in the districts. They are oriented to problems indigenous to the district. We will not use Councils for publicity purposes but to actually counsel with us about specific problems and needs. We will not gather them together for busywork nor to necessarily condone what we preach.

As we move ahead into the development of our magnet schools and educational-cultural complexes, I am sure that I will come to appreciate the flexibility which I see in decentralization as it is now beginning to function. If the complex is to be successful, it will require imagination and administrative leadership. It will call for the vision of a generalist who can see the totality of student, staff, community, business, private and parochial school relationship . . . . All that should be and must be participating

in the involvement to make it work.

Decentralization, as I see it, must bring about that overworked cliché--sensitivity. More and more I am trying to say the same thing in a different way. Each of us in an administrative capacity in the Chicago Public Schools must listen more, observe more, comprehend more and understand more.

We have got to do this as a daily exercise if we are to function in a changing, complex, urban society. We must pool what we know, and we must share in what we do.

This is what we are about in Chicago. Yet, I do not want you to believe that all of this leads to consensus. There will never be a time when the office of the General Superintendent of Schools in any city will not be a lonely place for the man who sits there.

When he has reached the ultimate in democratic procedure through decentralization, he will still find that the final decisions which have to be made will come to him without benefit of a crystal ball. The "hard ones" never seem to go away.

Having finished the case studies, there still remains a haunting query:

What do you do with problems which transcend the law and go directly to the hearts of men?

What do you do to allay people's fears, uncertainties and distrust?

What are the profound words superintendents must

utter that will get people to believe that they do care about children--whatever the color of their skin, whatever their religion, whatever their nationality?

I wish I knew.

Yet, wherever I go these days, I--like other superintendents--am being asked for blunt straightforward answers to extremely complex problems. Our listeners like to believe that the answers are readily at hand; all we have to do is spell them out; and the turmoil of our society will disappear.

Unfortunately, society does not react in the precise way that we would like to have it perform.

As a society, people rebel against restrictions. Particularly do they rebel against those who have the unenviable task of pointing out how each must be curtailed if all are to survive in a megalopolis like Chicago; which megalopolis expands farther and farther from the core of the city, which still remains--for city and suburb--the basic unit.

The more I contemplate my own little niche in this vast, complex, interdependent, metropolitan giant called Chicago, the more I find it difficult to say what I will or can do. Sometimes it seems futile for me to say that I will have more and better schools, more land, better teaching, more and better programs of education. How am I to get them?

There is not one task facing me which does not in some way interfere with some individual's right to be left

alone. I cannot move in the way of building schools, and rehabilitating and modernizing and tearing them down, or modifying instructional programs--unless the citizens determine that I have the hundreds of millions of dollars necessary to do the job.

I cannot adequately pay teachers, have small class size, separate the disturbed child from the normal child, provide programs of education which meet the vast range of abilities and aptitudes of all children--unless the citizens, the State of Illinois and the federal government provide me with the funds to meet these needs.

I cannot provide integrated education if people move across a given street and out of the school district.

These are the thoughts which race through my every waking moment and must race through the minds of every urban superintendent. How do we stir our cities, board members, staffs, citizens, students? How do we communicate so that each one of us becomes tremendously important in the solution of the problems which the cynic says are insoluble?

Today, in Chicago, there is a coming-together of professional people, business and industry, governmental officials, finance men, and religious leaders. Out of their combined efforts will come, I hope, solutions to the massive social problems of our city.

Cooperatively, we have a job to do: We must provide the means to make meaningful the educational experiences which will help each child to develop to his potential.

The task is not easy. Whatever is new or different seems to challenge our snug, comfortable feeling that the old ways are the safe ways.

If we do not learn to live and to work together, we must certainly look forward to more and greater problems. If we cannot find ways to maintain a fine and balanced city, we can only anticipate a bleak and desolate metropolitan area.